



# Women of Impact

THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA HONORS

## Botswana's 2005 Vanguard Women Leaders

Representatives from the U.S. Mission in Botswana selected the semi-finalists for the 2005 Vanguard Women Leaders Award. The winners were chosen based upon their records of leadership, community service and advancement of women's rights and opportunities. The 2005 Vanguard Women Leaders Award is presented not only to women who have a long established record in leadership, the award is also presented to the women the committee felt had the potential to make a positive impact on Botswana. Congratulations to all of the winners.



**Patricia Bakwinya** is founder and Coordinator of the Tshireletso AIDS awareness campaign and "The Shining Stars of Monarch" day care center in Francistown, which offers counseling, educational and recreational opportunities to children in the local community. She is a committed grass-roots HIV/AIDS activist who feels passionately about educating the community about HIV/AIDS issues. Her personal style is to cut through red tape and make things happen. Ms. Bakwinya's greatest interest lies with working with young people. She feels that her modest upbringing helps to show the community a example of the opportunities that at possible and she feels that she is a source of hope and a role model.

To the girls and young women of Botswana, she says that "you all have dreams that you want to live someday. No one can take those dreams away from you, unless you let them." She advises young girls to avoid the temptation and to "stay away from 'sugar daddies' and you will reach your dreams."



**Kesego Basha-Mupeli** is the Director and Founder of the Centre for Youth of Hope (CEYOHO) and the organizer of the Miss HIV Stigma Free pageant. Ms. Basha-Mupeli, herself HIV+, has personally motivated many people to test for HIV and know their status. She has taken the lead in mobilizing women to deal with their HIV status. She has also motivated young people, through schools, to deal with issues of stigma related to HIV/AIDS and is a role-model to many students. She feels passionately about the need to provide information to Persons living with HIV and AIDS, especially women and also to provide support to mothers with children who are HIV positive. Ms. Basha has also been a board member of BONEPWA.

Her advice to girls is "that they should know and understand themselves, to stand firm, to have high self esteem and *SAY NO* to unprotected sex."



**Chigedze Virginia Chinyepe** is the Country Representative for Botswana of the American and African Business Women's Alliance (AABWA) and Managing Director of three businesses. Ms. Chinyepe is an activist in women's issues and has been on the executive committee of the Women in Business Association (WIBA) for nearly twenty-five years. Through her involvement with AABWA and WIBA, Ms. Chinyepe has assisted in placing Botswana on the globe as an investment partner. In her role as a consultant, she has assisted women to take advantage and participate fully in the provisions made by the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA.) She has assisted over 500 entrepreneurs to access government assistance schemes and continues to mentor and support her clients.

Ms. Chinyepe advises girls and young women to "explore opportunities of self-employment through entrepreneurial development activities, identify organizations that promote mentoring programs and use technology to promote dialogue and equip themselves with necessary tools and techniques for better advancement of their skills."



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**Shombie Ellis** is the Presenter of the morning show on GABZ FM. Each morning for three hours, this show intersperses features and segments on careers, health and personal development and encompasses a one-hour live segment called "The Daily Grind" in which local callers can discuss daily international and domestic current affairs issues. Ms. Ellis is also a youth advocate, public speaker and activist on HIV/AIDS issues. She has also worked on national TV as a presenter. Ms. Ellis is a poet and is active in bringing the arts scene to life in Botswana through Exodus Live Poetry.

She would like to say to young girls "that education, faith and perseverance is the key to achieving one's dreams. Young girls should never limit themselves and should always dream BIG. As long as you believe it, you can be it."



**Tsetsele Fantan** is the Executive Director at ACHAP and is responsible for providing leadership and strategic direction on programs and developing and maintaining relationships with key national and international stakeholders. She has a wealth of experience in the Human Resources field and prior to joining the African Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Partnerships (ACHAP) was the Human Resources Manager and Director of HIV/AIDS Impact Management at Debswana.

Ms. Fantan's advice to women and young girls is "learning does not stop when you graduate. Be focused and work hard at what you do. Maintain your individuality and express your opinions clearly and firmly. Choose your battles carefully and be flexible but don't sacrifice your principles. Learn to say no to yourself before you say it to others."



**Dorcus Kgosietsile** is an astute businesswoman. Her c.v. lists a wealth of experience, linkages, partnerships and consultancies. As the managing and lead consultant for Business Clinic (Pty) Ltd, she has been engaged in top consulting positions for ECI Africa, working with the Corporate Council on Africa (USA) mandate for the Southern African International Business Linkages project. Her (almost) two decades with the Botswana Development Corporation set her a good foundation for her future projects. She has worked as a consultant for numerous think tanks, development operations and government initiatives such as BIDPA, UNCTAD, ADF amongst others.

Her advice to girls and young women is "to dedicated themselves as team players as the Setswana proverb says Se tshwarwa ke ntja pedi ga se thata" (literally translated to mean responsibilities are easier shared by two dogs.) Women should draw strength from their multiple role dilemma and use this as a calling and do it really well with integrity."



**Marty Legwaila** is the Director of the Women's Affairs Department at the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs. She has worked for the greater part of her career in the education field and has held important positions within Botswana's literacy program and distance education programs, which assisted many girls and young women to further their studies in situations where it would have been otherwise impossible. Ms. Legwaila has also coordinated many significant conferences and workshops.

Ms. Legwaila's advice to girls and young women is "girls are the future mothers of this Nation and have to be advised to be assertive and stand for what they believe in. They must expose themselves to information in order to make more informed choices. They should work hard – three times as hard as boys — they should delay childbearing and they should venture into male-dominated fields."

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**Dorcus Makgato-Malesu** is the Director Corporate for Barloworld. Prior to holding this position, Ms Makgato-Malesu has held positions of Head of Human Resources at Barloworld, Head of Commercial Division and Human Resources at Air Botswana and a variety of management and leadership roles at Debswana. She serves on a number of Boards and chairs the Botswana National Sports Council as Non-Executive Chairperson. She serves on several other sports bodies and was recently knighted by the International Military Sports Council (CISM) for outstanding contribution to the development of sport in the world as well as recognized in Montreal, Canada World Conference for Woman and Sport outstanding contribution. She believes firmly in core values of self belief and empowerment.

Her advice to young women is to "understand who you are, be responsible and accountable for your actions and understand that gender has nothing to do with your ability to reach great heights."



**Mmasekgoa Masire-Mwamba** is the CEO of the Botswana Export Development and Investment Authority (BEDIA). Under her leadership, BEDIA's contribution to diversifying the economy through export development and investment promotion has been given new impetus. She has extensive local, international and management experience in the promotion and development of Botswana. Ms. Masire-Mwamba also has a broad viewpoint and contact arena. Through Ms. Masire-Mwamba, BEDIA's reputation, both internationally and within Botswana has grown significantly.

Her advice to girls and young women is "to realize that we all have a role to play in the development of the country, and girls must be self-disciplined and work hard and must appreciate other's contributions. Girls must recognize the privilege of serving others and reap the rewards of using your gifts and talents to your fullest potential."



**Alice Mogwe** is the Director of Ditshwanelo – the Botswana Centre for Human Rights. As an early Motswana feminist, one of the early activists in the field of gender, a founding member of Women and Law in Southern Africa, and a pioneer of Botswana's human rights movement, Alice has contributed a great deal to the people of Botswana. She has raised the profile of minority groups and human rights issues and by founding Ditshwanelo she has given a voice and

some security to persons and groups who can otherwise be deemed as victims of circumstance.

Her advice to girls and young women is to "identify and understand your personal value system and strive to live by it in both your professional and personal lives. Identify mentors for guidance and remain committed to why you do what you do."



**Sebaetseng Glenda Mokokwe** is a football referee and teacher at Westwood School. A sports fanatic, she passed the referees fitness test in 1999 and was accredited as the first female referee from Botswana in 2000. Ms. Mokokwe is also the Women's Football chairperson and an executive member of the Women and Sport Botswana Council. Ms. Mokokwe's achievements and success has changed the attitudes of the people of Botswana towards women's involvement within male-dominated sports domains.

Ms Mokokwe encourages all girls to "enter male-dominated fields with confidence and without fear, she sees perseverance as a key to success." She also encourages all girls to get involved in sports and physical activities, as one of the important ingredients in the recipe for success.

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**Athaliah Molokomme** is a High Court Judge. Justice Molokomme has taught law at the University of Botswana and has published extensively in the fields of family law, women and law, customary law and employment law. Her research has resulted in changes to law and policy in Botswana. For the past two decades she has also been a regular speaker at national, regional and international conferences in her areas of expertise. Her work in gender issues includes five years with SADC as the founding head of the Gender Unit. She is a founding member of Emang Basadi, Women and Law in Southern Africa and Women, Law and Development International. In this capacity as a pioneering activist she has raised the public awareness of fundamental human rights and gender equality.

Justice Molokomme encourages girls and young women to "make education their number one priority" as it is the "key to entering any profession." Furthermore, Justice Molokomme says, "Now days, women have the opportunity to build both fulfilling careers and happy families" and believes that young women "should postpone sexual activity for as long as possible and delay having children until their mid-20's" so that they can spend their formative years in education and building a career.



**Sisai Mpuchane** is a biological scientist and Professor at the University of Botswana. In her thirty-one years in tertiary education she has made major contributions towards the teaching of young Botswana, many of who now hold top positions in government and the private sector. Professor Mpuchane has been a driving force in the development of the science faculty at the University through her mentoring and leadership position as Dean, through her efforts to raise money for research and assisting the University to raise its international profile. She has been an advocate for higher participation of girls in science and has worked with girls in schools and with the Ministry of Education and other universities worldwide. She has been involved in the production of booklets to encourage girls to participate in science activities.

Her advice to women and young girls is to "encourage them to work extremely hard, to stay focused and to be committed to serving the Country."



**Sheila Tlou** is the specially-elected Minister of Health. Prior to this position, Professor Tlou was a Professor of Nursing and the HIV/AIDS coordinator at the University of Botswana. Professor Tlou has vast educational qualifications and has more than eighty publications to her name. Professor Tlou has attained recognition for her gender activities and involvement with the HIV/AIDS pandemic at an international level. She is also a member of several gender issues and HIV/AIDS organizations in Botswana and she has received many distinguished awards throughout her career.

Her advice to girls and young women in Botswana is "Knowledge is Power. Please acquire as much of it as possible to advocate for yourselves and to prevent anyone from discriminating against you, or undermining you, without your permission."

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